(d) the concrete steps proposed to be taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) to (d) During the 1971 war, 532 Indian soldiers were taken Prisoners of War by Pakistan. All these soldiers have been repatriated to India. Subsequently, Government were informed about 54 missing Indian soldiers who arc believed to be in Pakistani jails. The Government has consistently taken up the issue of their release and repatriation with the Government of Pakistan at all levels. During the Agra Summit on 15.7.2001 also, Prime Minister urged the Pakistani President to take urgent and purposeful action towards the release of these PoWs.

Pakistan has never acknowledged the presence of any PoW in its custody. Following the Agra Summit in July last year, Government of Pakistan reportedly conducted another search for Indian PoWs but again reiterated that there was no Indian PoW in Pakistani jails. Government would continue to take up this issue with the Government of Pakistan.

Equipping coast guard to meet new challenges of maritime zones

1089. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that with the increasing security threat at sea besides country's growing sea frontiers, Government have reviewed the existing resources and equipment available to the force for its effective maritime operations;

(b) if so, what are the details thereof; and

(c) what measures have been taken by Government to equip the coast guard to meet the new challenges in the country's maritime zones?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) The Government have reviewed the existing resources and equipment available to the Coast Guard to effectively meet the

needs of its maritime operations and new challenges. Appropriate equipment and funds will be made available to the Coast Guard to meet its operational commitments.

Pakistan's plans to attack in Poonch

1090. SHRI SATISH PRADHAN: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Pakistan Government has again planned to attack in Poonch as was done in Kargil as appeared in the vernacular daily Lokmat dated 30th January, 2002.

(b) whether terrorists arc entering Indian territory for such activities, and

(c) whether Government have taken security measures to counteract such activities?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) and (b) There is no credible intelligence report to confirm the news item which appeared in the vernacular daily Lokmat on 30.1.2002 on this subject.

(c) Army has instituted a comprehensive surveillance system and adopted a suitable defensive posture to ensure security of our borders and the Line of Control.

Standard schedule of rates for construction of bridges by BRO

1091. SHRI RAMACHANDRA KHUNTIA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Border Roads Organisation is yet to form a standard schedule of rates for different areas;

(b) if so, reasons therefor;

(c) the bases on which BRO prepares its estimates for construction of bridges; and

(d) the fresh steps taken/proposed to be taken by Government to ensure time bound completion of construction of bridges undertaken by BRO?